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THE EXTENSION HORTICULTURIST

July 1, 1923.

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* Another fiscal year has closed and we are now *
* starting a new account so far as funds are concerned. *
* Under existing conditions a degree of economy consistent *
* with the securing of results in our extension work is *
* essential. Careful planning of travel will go a long *
* way in the conserving of funds, but after all the big *
* thing is to put the work across in a convincing manner. *
* After all the measure of success in extension work is *
* the degree to which the results of a demonstration are *
* accepted and become a part of the permanent and profit- *
* able practice of a community. *
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Office of Horticultural and Pomological Investigations
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Knockers.

Traveling about the country and meeting hundreds of fruit and vegetable growers, one is often surprised at the number of these people who are "chronic Knockers." They knock the seedsmen who sell them the seeds with which to plant their crops; they knock the dealers who sell them fertilizer and tools; they knock the county agent and say that he is no good; they knock the state specialists and the extension service; they take a rap at the State Experiment Station and at the Federal Department. Not one of them can point to a single instance where he himself has done anything to better conditions. Very few of these disturbing individuals know what their experiment station or the extension service is doing for their benefit and probably wouldn't apply the lessons if they did. The knocker is a problem on the hands of everybody who is trying to improve the agriculture of the country and it is often a question whether to go on ignoring him or try to convert him to a different viewpoint.

The writer once knew a man who always took the pessimistic view of everything. If he started to town he predicted rain and bad roads before he got back home, he "knew" that it was no use trying to sell his butter and eggs; if he started to take someone to the station to board a train he assured them that he could not make it in time and invariably the passenger waited for an hour before the train arrived. If he planted a crop of potatoes he was sure that the bugs would eat them up. This man was a natural born pessimist, and enjoyed looking on the dark side of things. A great many of our vegetable growers belong to a certain degree in this class, and their whole attitude stands in the way of their progress.

It is a question whether the state specialist or the county agent can afford to spend his time with this class of men, but there must be some way of reaching them if the work is to go across to the best advantage. Occasionally one finds a county agent who has the pessimistic viewpoint or else becomes a knocker through contact with those who live by knocking. Usually the county agent who has this attitude is interested mainly in one line of work and is unable to grasp the full possibilities of the agriculture of his county. Occasionally the specialist can get him out of this rut, set him on the main line and start him going. If this can be accomplished, all well and good, if not, a change of climate is the only thing that will cure the disease and the sooner it comes the better. The real problem of the specialist, however, is to get his work across so thoroughly and convincingly that the knockers will be left without a peg to stand upon. They may not, however, stop their knocking, but the influence that they wield in a community will be greatly diminished or entirely overshadowed by the results obtained through the cooperation of those who are optimistic and can look upon the bright side of things.

Just at present the vegetable industry of the United States is going through a serious economic period, mainly from the labor standpoint and while prices for vegetables are fairly satisfactory, the cost of production has increased materially within the past year and it requires extremely careful management to safeguard against losses. In many cases truck growers have been tempted to economize in the application of fertilizers and through the purchase of cheaper seeds, both of which are vital mistakes under most conditions. As a result of this false economy many of the crops are showing

up poorly, thus giving the "knockers" of the neighborhood a chance to get in their work, and strange as it may seem, the extension service and the experiment station come in for a good share of their attacks.

The careful locating of demonstrations with growers who are in sympathy with the work and who will give the proper attention to carrying it out is the first essential in safeguarding results. Reasonably frequent visits on the part of the specialist will also aid in holding the work in line. The other essential is in having all of the better growers of the community visit the demonstrations and see the results for themselves. By and by the "knockers" will suspect that they are missing something and will come along and get so enthusiastic that they will forget to knock and begin boosting.

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Meeting of the Vegetable Growers Association of America.

There are several Nation-wide organizations, the activities of which are of vital importance and interest to the fruit and vegetable extension men of the country. Among these are the American Pomological Society, the American Society for Horticultural Science, and the Vegetable Growers Association of America. The annual meeting of the Vegetable Growers Association is to be held in the Statler Hotel, Buffalo, New York, September 17 to 20, inclusive. President Thompson of Massachusetts and Secretary Nissley of New Jersey are doing everything in their power to make this meeting a success and one that will be of great profit to the vegetable industry. Those of us who are in close contact with the vegetable industry realize the great importance of having an active association of this character to secure the necessary cooperation in the carrying on of both investigational and extension work in horticulture. It is our belief that state specialists in vegetable work will find it greatly to their interest and profit to attend the Buffalo meeting. Those of the vegetable men who are located within a radius of 400 or 500 miles of Buffalo might very conveniently make this a vacation trip, traveling in their machines and taking their families along; others who desire to make this strictly a business trip might assemble at some convenient point and motor to Buffalo, thus cutting down the cost of traveling. Our suggestion is that you talk the matter over with your Director and see if it cannot be arranged for you to attend the Buffalo meeting.

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Home Orchard Replies.

A number of replies have been received concerning the proposed home orchard. We hope others will send in their ideas so that the whole discussion may be summarized in a future number of the "Extension Horticulturist." If you do not write us to the contrary, we will assume that the home orchard of dwarf apple and pear trees seems feasible to you.

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Field Trips.

As this is being written, Prof. Close is making a trip to the following

states: Ohio on June 25, 26, and 27; Indiana on June 28, 29, and 30; Michigan on July 5, 6, and 7; Wisconsin July 10 to 14, inclusive; Illinois on July 16, 17, and 19.

In Wisconsin the summer field meeting of the Great Plains section of the American Society for Horticultural Science will begin at Oshkosh on July 11. Experimental and demonstration plats around Oshkosh will be inspected. The sour cherry orchards in the Sturgeon Bay section will be visited and the trip will probably be extended to the Door County Peninsula fruit section.

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Mr. Beattie has just completed automobile trips through parts of Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio, covering something over 2,500 miles, and visiting many of the leading truck farms of those states. While these trips were primarily on investigational work, a number of important points in connection with the vegetable extension work were gathered. It was on this trip that some of the "knockers" referred to in this issue were encountered. We are glad to report, however, that this class is largely in the minority, and, that for the most part, the vegetable growers of the sections visited were hard at work, cheerful and determined to overcome labor and other difficulties that they are encountering.

The season throughout the northeast section is extremely backward and variable as to temperature and rainfall. The stand of truck crops in the large producing areas is as a rule good and while many of the crops are more or less weedy, the work is being gotten rapidly in hand and prospects are for fair crops.

The greenhouse vegetable growers of the Great Lakes region are in better shape than formerly on account of the relief in the fuel situation. The presence of nematodes in greenhouse soils is a vexing problem and one that is not likely to be fully overcome through present methods of control. Western grown head lettuce is seriously affecting the sale of the loose leaf or Grand Rapids lettuce now grown in the vegetable forcing houses of the Great Lakes section and there is need for the development of a strain of lettuce better adapted for growing under glass in this territory. Red spider and mildew have caused considerable loss to the greenhouse cucumber crop and growers are in need of help in working out better control measures. The Ashtabula growers, representing approximately 50 acres under glass, are handling their crops through a central packing shed and are making marked progress in the matter of standardization and uniformity of packs by this method. The central packing arrangement is also effecting a decided saving in labor and cost of packing.

At Marietta, Ohio, where there are several hundred acres of early tomatoes being grown by the pruning and staking method, some losses from diseases are occurring. On the whole, however, the tomato crop of the Marietta section is showing up well and should net the growers a reasonable profit. Everywhere, however, one finds the universal need of variety and strain improvement with practically all kinds of vegetables.

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Seed Potato Certification in Ohio.

Potato seed certification in Ohio is now administered under the Extension Division of the University, having been transferred from the State Department of Agriculture. This service is on a self supporting basis, a charge being made of \$1.00 an acre with a minimum of \$5.00 and 5¢ per bushel for the first 100 bushels of certified seed and 2¢ a bushel for all additional certified seed sold by each individual grower.

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The following interesting outline of the horticultural extension work in Idaho from Mr. E. R. Bennett, Field Horticulturist, is hereby gratefully acknowledged and is given for the benefit of our readers:

"The type of horticultural demonstration work in Idaho, like Topsy, just "grewed." In other words, it has developed as the result of popular demand and necessity rather than in conformity to any preconceived and elaborated plan. At the time the writer came into the State, September, 1916, the fruit industry, particularly apple growing, was decidedly unpopular and orchards were being pulled up at a rate that gave promise of an appleless state. With that feeling among growers, there was little hope of putting on any worth while fruit growing demonstrations. Potatoes were popular, consequently the bulk of the work being done was with that crop.

Given a big state, a scattered industry and one man for the work, the tendency is strong to concentrate on but few projects. Because of these conditions, potato work has been and still is the dominating horticultural project. The title of this subproject has been "The Improvement of the Potato Growing Industry in Idaho," and while this is divided into several phases, that of the improving of the industry by the growing and certifying of seed potatoes has been the dominant phase. For two or three years it seemed to me that this work was more or less of a fad and would eventually become unpopular, but after the second year the work has steadily grown in popularity and this, in the face of a continuously rising standard of requirements. It would hardly be the truth to say that we have not had adverse results in some cases, but the increase in yield and improvement in quality has been so marked that few commercial growers now question the value of certified seed. The big problem has been to educate the bulk of growers to realize their true situation, which is, that owing to high freight rates and distance from markets, it is imperative for the grower to secure two results, i. e., big yields and high quality. Without these he has no hope of making his crop pay the cost of production.

This same set of factors has made horticultural demonstrations in the northwest states comparatively simple, inasmuch as it applies alike to fruits and vegetables.

Since the era of high taxes and low prices for agricultural products came on, there has been almost a revolution in the agricultural practices on the irrigated lands of Idaho. It did not take the grower long to discover that the extensive crops being grown did not bring sufficient return to pay the labor, water rent and taxes. The first result of this was an abnormal acreage of head lettuce and potatoes. This is being followed by cauliflower

and celery with lesser acreages of garden seed, small fruits and some other vegetables. Many of the growers who are attempting this work are men who have had no experience with intensive crops, hence, it has been necessary for the horticulturist to take on in an active way a truck growing project. This season we have demonstrations in celery and cauliflower of sufficient acreages to make carlot shipments and trial plots of Brussels sprouts and other lesser crops.

This subdivision of the horticultural project promises to challenge the supremacy of the potato improvement work, and, to a great extent, the prevailing conditions justify the efforts on the part of the growers to change their cropping system.

The ultimate object of all extension work is to promote and encourage better living. How to attain this end without antagonizing the people with whom we work is a question that must be considered. We have started this work with the premise that pride in the home automatically makes for better living. Pride in the home will be developed if the home surroundings are made attractive. With this as a basis, the horticulturist has, for the past five years, carried a project of home improvement. Most of this work is done by giving illustrated lectures on "The Home as a Picture" or "The Home Beautiful." In this we try to show that the home with its surroundings makes a picture and by a study of landscape pictures - mostly views of the mountain, forest and home scenes of this State - we aim to show the principles of landscape gardening as applied to the home in the way of orderly arrangement, unity, definite composition, fitness, etc., and show that the desired results are obtained by making open space lawns, grouping trees and shrubbery on the borders, as screens and with a small amount of shrubbery banked against the buildings. Considerable time is required to get the average individual educated away from the theory that improving the home grounds consists of adorning the place with beautiful objects without regard to form or arrangement. We have found that the principles taught do eventually penetrate, as we are finding country places being planted systematically and on inquiry we are told that they are following the system being taught by the extension workers.

As to results, we find it hard to measure them in terms of dollars or bushels even with the potato improvement project. Our most satisfactory measure is to find growers talking of methods of securing big yields and high quality and of the factors that determine them when we know they are teaching and practicing the things they have learned through the work of the Extension Service.

We have specific demonstrations with all these projects; that is, potatoes grown under our direction, apple orchards pruned according to the system advocated by the horticulturist, and the growing of the various vegetables for distant markets as well as homes planted according to plans made by the horticulturist. The time devoted to each of these demonstrations is determined by the importance of the work and by the insistence of the demand."

W. R. Beattie, Extension Horticulturist.

C. P. Close, Extension Pomologist.

